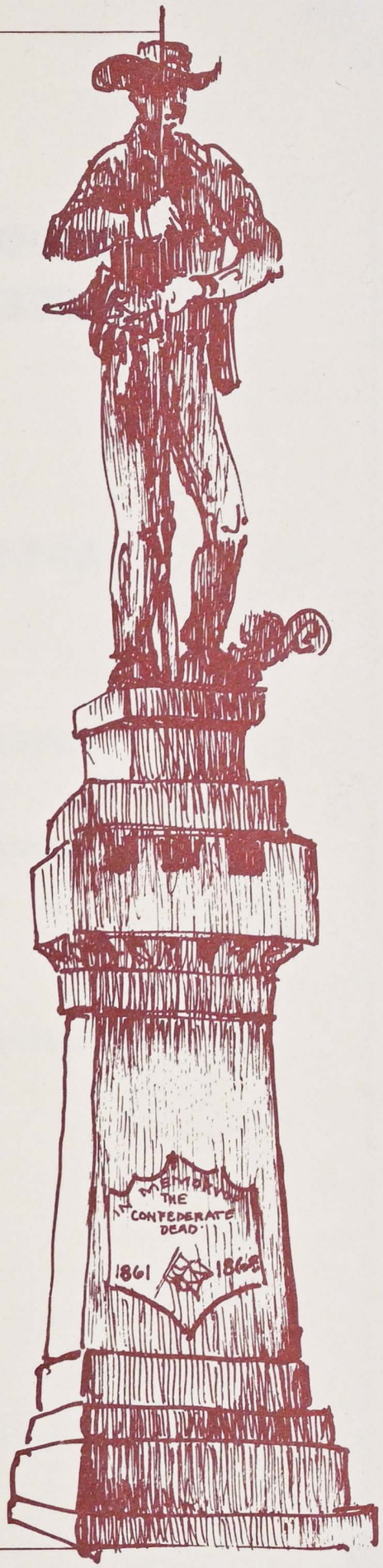
History Walk Around Downtown Gainesville



HISTORY WALK AROUND DOWNTOWN GAINESVILLE

Prepared for the

GAINESVILLE CENTENNIAL

by

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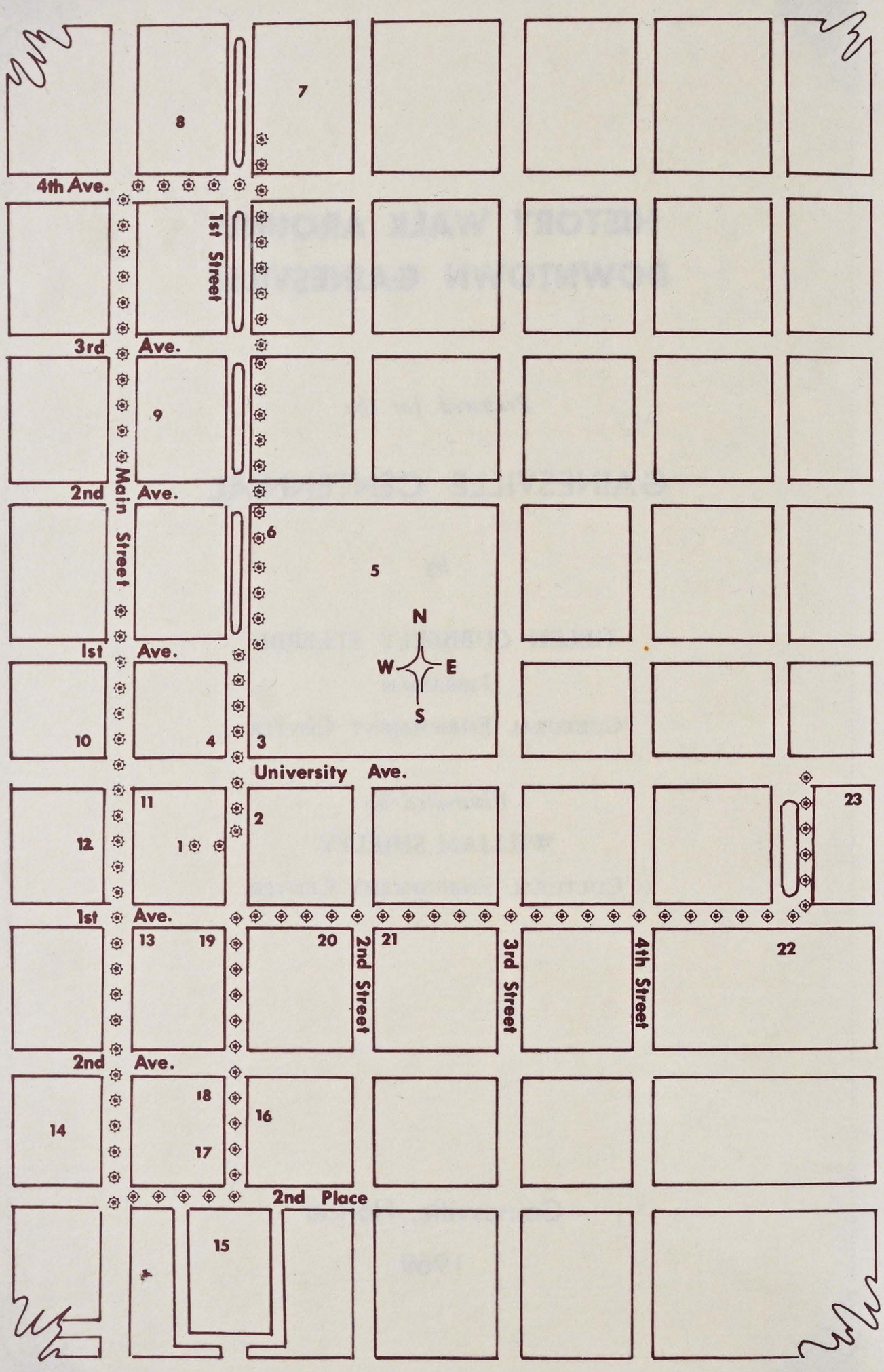
Gainesville, Florida
1969


4th Ave.
3rd Ave.
2nd Ave.
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1st Street
Main Street
University Ave.
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KEY TO MAP

1. County Courthouse
2. Baird Hardware Company
3. Vidal Drug Company
4. Wilson's Department Store
5. Municipal Building and Library
6. Old City Hall
7. Epworth Hall
8. Citizens Bank, site of White House Hotel
9. Masonic Temple, site of Episcopal Church
10. Arlington Hotel site
11. Confederate Monument
12. Site of Fire of 1938
13. Chitty Company
14. Site of Miss Tebeau's School
15. Old Post Office
16. First Presbyterian Church
17. Lyric Theatre site
18. First Fire Station site
19. Cox Furniture Company, formerly Baird Theatre
20. Site of Oldest garage
21. Old filling station
22. Federal Building
23. Old Library site

PREFACE.

Gainesville received its name when it became the county seat of Alachua county in 1854. The name was selected by vote of the citizens of the area in honor of Gen. Edmund Pendleton Gaines who became famous during the war of 1812 and later commanded United States forces fighting against the Indians during the Seminole Indian Wars in Florida. The change of the location of the county seat from Newnansville was desirable because the Fernandina to Cedar Key railroad came through Gainesville. The first passenger train arrived in Gainesville on April 21, 1859.

The city grew slowly while it served an agricultural community. Its citizens were in favor of secession and supported the Confederacy with men and supplies important to the progress of the war. Col. J. J. Dickison, whose home was near Gainesville, commanded the Confederate troops in a successful battle at Gainesville which secured territory essential for the support of the Confederacy.

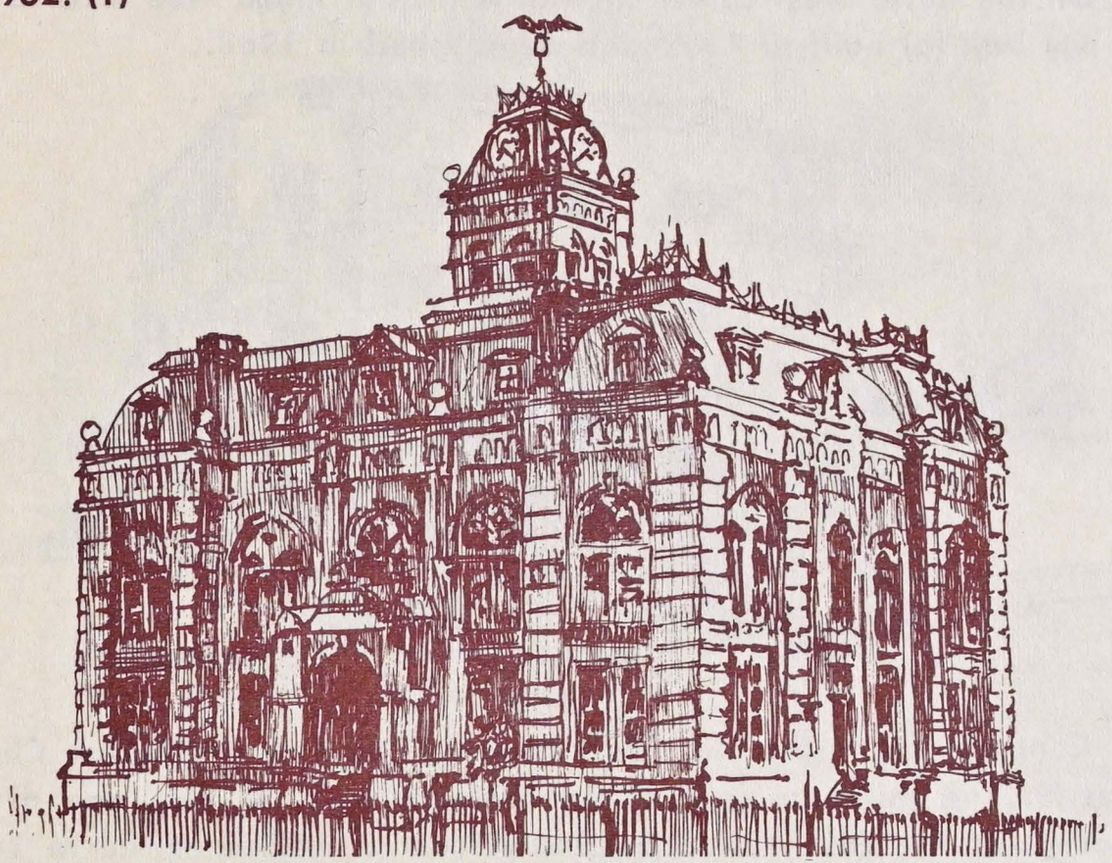
During reconstruction the city recovered slowly. It was incorporated on April 15, 1869 with a mayor and council government.

The early years of the twentieth century brought new developments to Gainesville. The University of Florida was located here in 1905 and has continued to be a dominant factor in the city's growth. With the coming of automobiles streets were paved and many of the trees and landscaped medians in the streets were sacrificed to increased traffic.

Annexation of outlying residential areas in 1962 led to rapid growth of city government and the building of a new municipal building which is being dedicated at the time the city celebrates one hundred years of incorporation.

HISTORY WALK AROUND DOWNTOWN GAINESVILLE

Begin at the square, where the first court house built of wood was completed in 1856. It was replaced in 1886 by a three story brick building with a clock tower. The present court house was constructed after the demolition of the second court house in 1960, and was dedicated in 1962. (1)



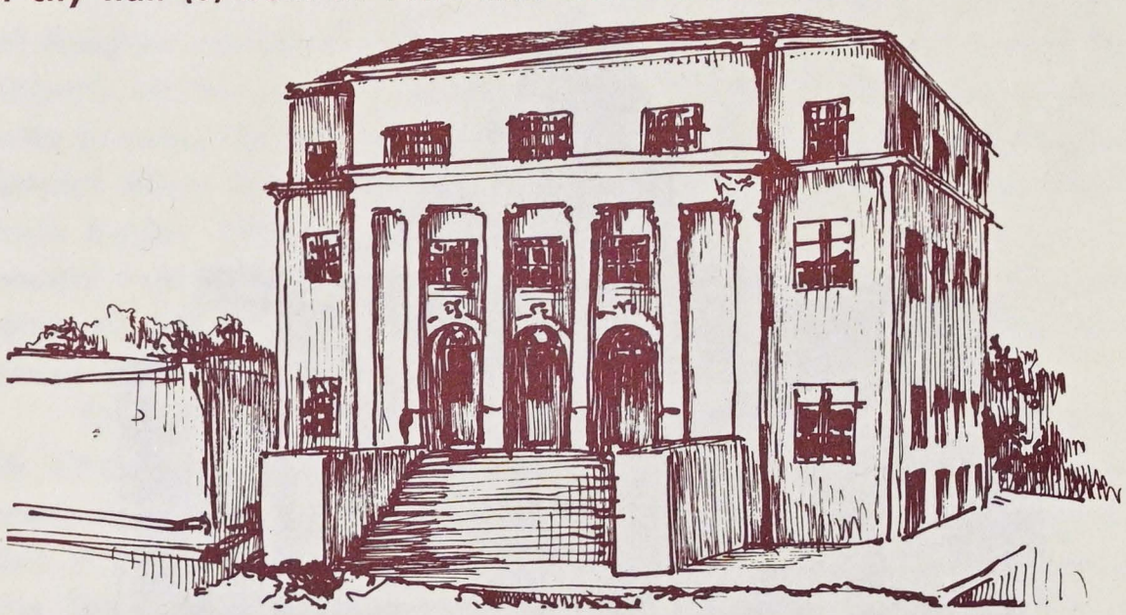
FORMER ALACHUA COUNTY COURTHOUSE

On the east side of the square Baird Hardware Company (2) has occupied a building since 1890. Across University Avenue on the north east and north west corners Vidal Drug Company (3) and Wilsons (4) have been in business on the same locations since the 1870s.

BAIRD HARDWARE COMPANY

Procede east on University Avenue to the new Municipal Building and Library (5) occupying a two block area. Looking east from the Library one can see the oldest part of a city school, Kirby Smith. This part of the school was the first brick twelve grade school erected in Gainesville in 1900 and called the University High School.

On the north west corner of the Municipal Plaza was located the first city hall (6) built in 1927 and demolished in 1968.



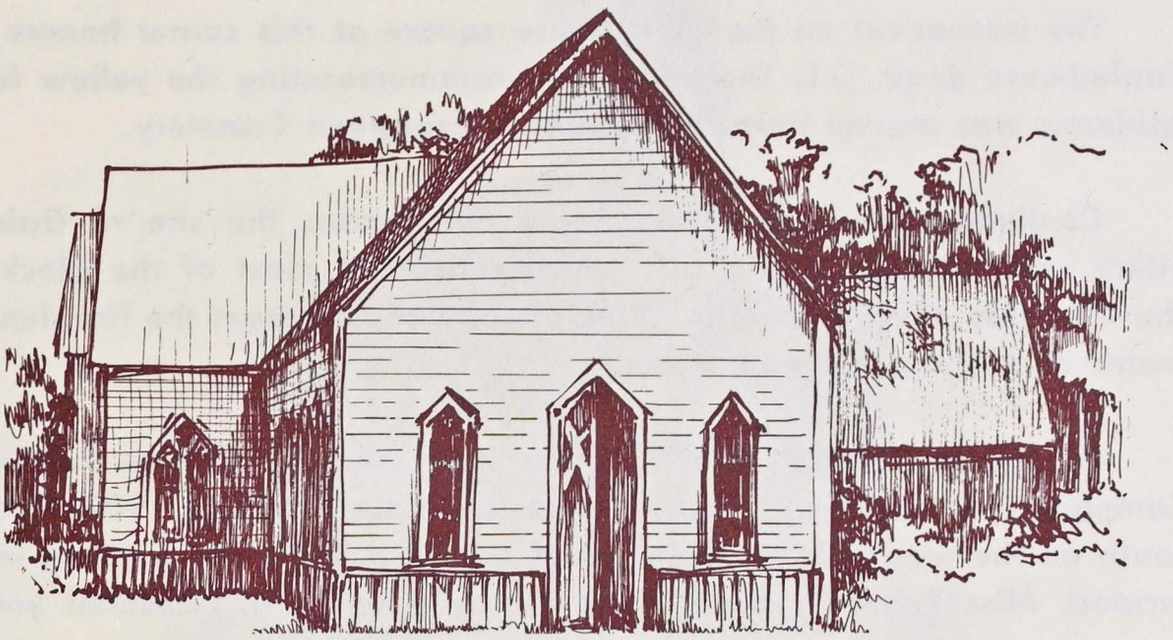
FIRST CITY HALL

Continue north on N.E. First Street to the First Methodist Church property. The building now called Epworth Hall (7) was one of the buildings of the East Florida Seminary located in Gainesville in 1866, and consolidated with other state colleges to form the University of Florida in 1905.

Across the street from Epworth Hall was located the girl's dormitory of the Seminary which was later remodeled into the White House Hotel. The Citizens Bank (8) now occupies this site. In the days when the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad was located on Main Street passengers alighted from the train at the White House for meals before the train proceded to the station, located where the First National Bank (9), established 1888, is now located.

WHITE HOUSE HOTEL

Procede to north Main Street and turn south. On the corner now occupied by the Masonic Temple (10) the first Episcopal church building of Holy Trinity Parish was erected in 1873. This building was moved to the corner of N.W. Fourth Street and Fourth Avenue where it still serves the city as St. Augustine Mission for Negro communicants.



FIRST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Continue south on Main Street to the corner of University Avenue. On the north west corner of this intersection stood the Arlington Hotel (10) in the 1880s with second floor verandas from which guests could view the courthouse square, well shaded by oak trees growing on each side of and in the center of ninety foot streets laid out when the county seat was moved to Gainesville in 1854.

OLD ARLINGTON HOTEL

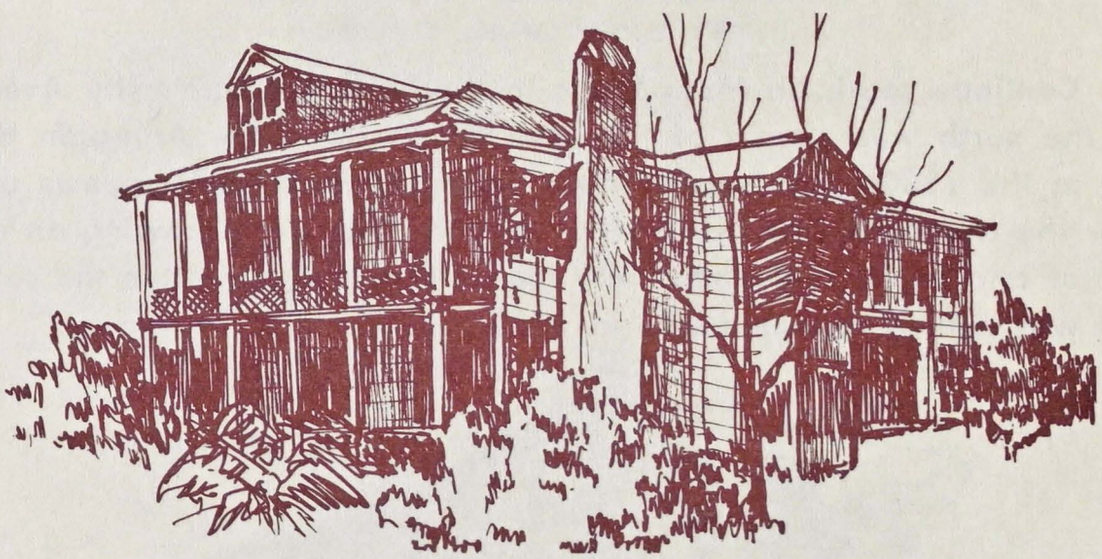
This corner was also the location of a skirmish on February 2, 1864 called the First Battle of Gainesville. The Second Battle of Gainesville was fought on August 14, 1864 from the railroad tracks south of town up to the Square, resulting in a decisive victory for the Confederate forces.

Looking west from this intersection, Main and University, one can see the Seagle Building, begun during the land boom of the 1920's as the Kelly Hotel but not completed until 1936 when it became a part of the University of Florida to house the State Museum and offices.

The monument on the court house square at this corner honors the Confederate dead. (11) The monument commemorating the yellow fever epidemic was moved from the Square to Evergreen Cemetery.

Continuing south on Main Street one passes the site of Gainesville's most disastrous fire (12) which consumed most of the block on the west side of the square in 1938, in spite of help from the fire departments of Jacksonville and Ocala.

On the south east corner of Main Street and 1st Avenue the Chitty Company (13) has been in business on the same site since 1902. Farther south on the west side of Main Street, where a large city parking lot is located, Miss Tebeau's Boarding and Day School (14) educated young

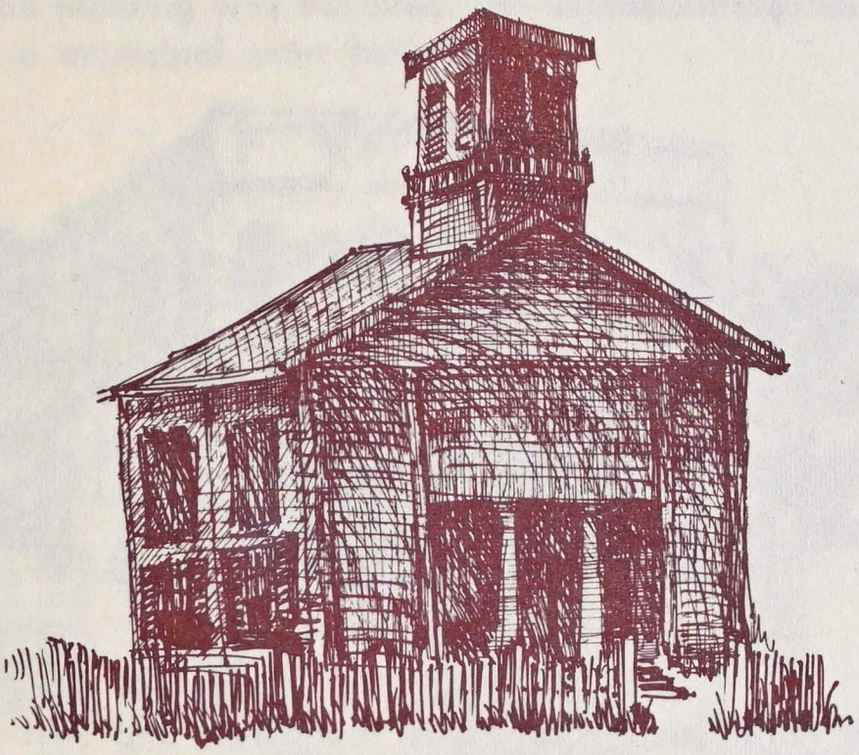


MISS TEBEAU'S SCHOOL

ladies for more than 70 years. Its gardens were noted for their large flowering shrubs. Farther south, where another old garden was bequeathed to the city by Mrs. L. C. Lynch, was located the cabin of Bob Higginbotham, the first settler in what is now Gainesville.

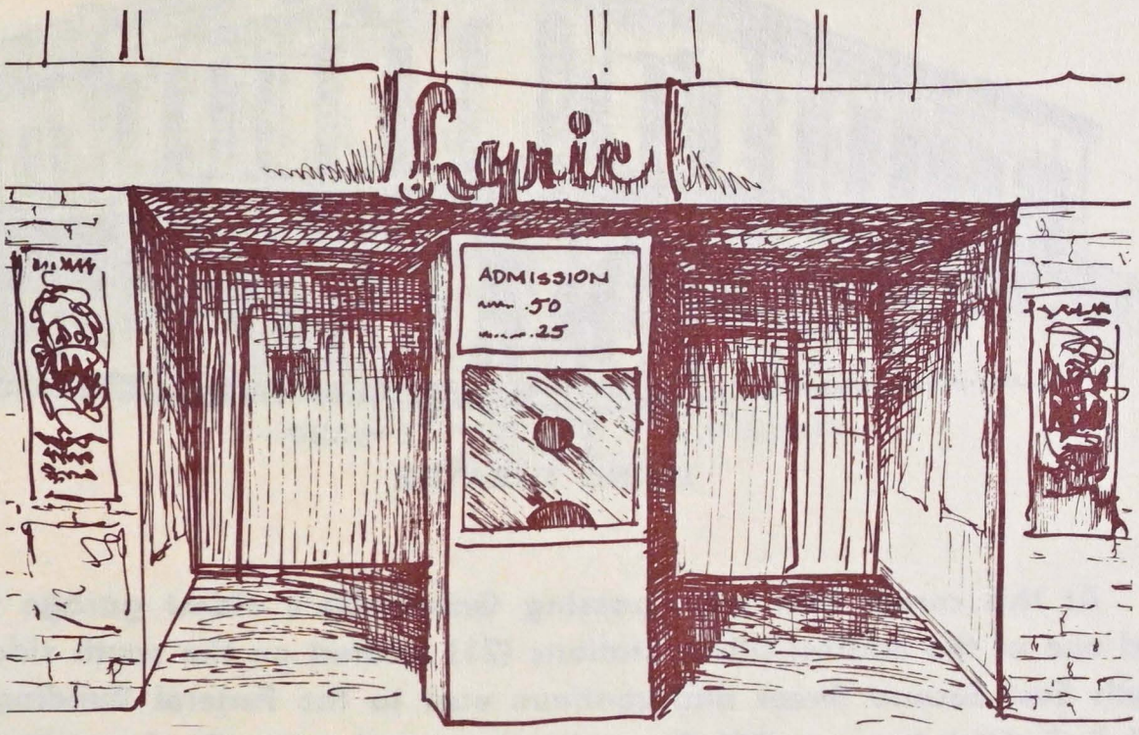
On reaching S.E. Second Place turn east to First Street S.W. Facing north at this intersection is Gainesville's first Federal Building (15) erected in 1909-11 after Oak Hall had been moved southwest of the site. Oak Hall was once the residence of Tillman Ingman, early Gainesville planter and builder, but later was used as a public building and U.S. Land Office. The post office and other federal offices occupied this first Federal Building at 25 S.E. Second Place until the new Federal Building was completed in 1964.

Turn north up S.E. First Street. On the east side in the 200 block was located the first Presbyterian Church (16) used by all denominations for a time after it was erected in 1860.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Across the street was located one of Gainesville's early moving picture theatres, the Lyric. (17)



OLD LYRIC THEATRE

At the northwest corner of Second Avenue and First Street was located the first city fire station. (18) Council meetings and the municipal court were held in part of the second floor of this building until the first city hall was constructed.

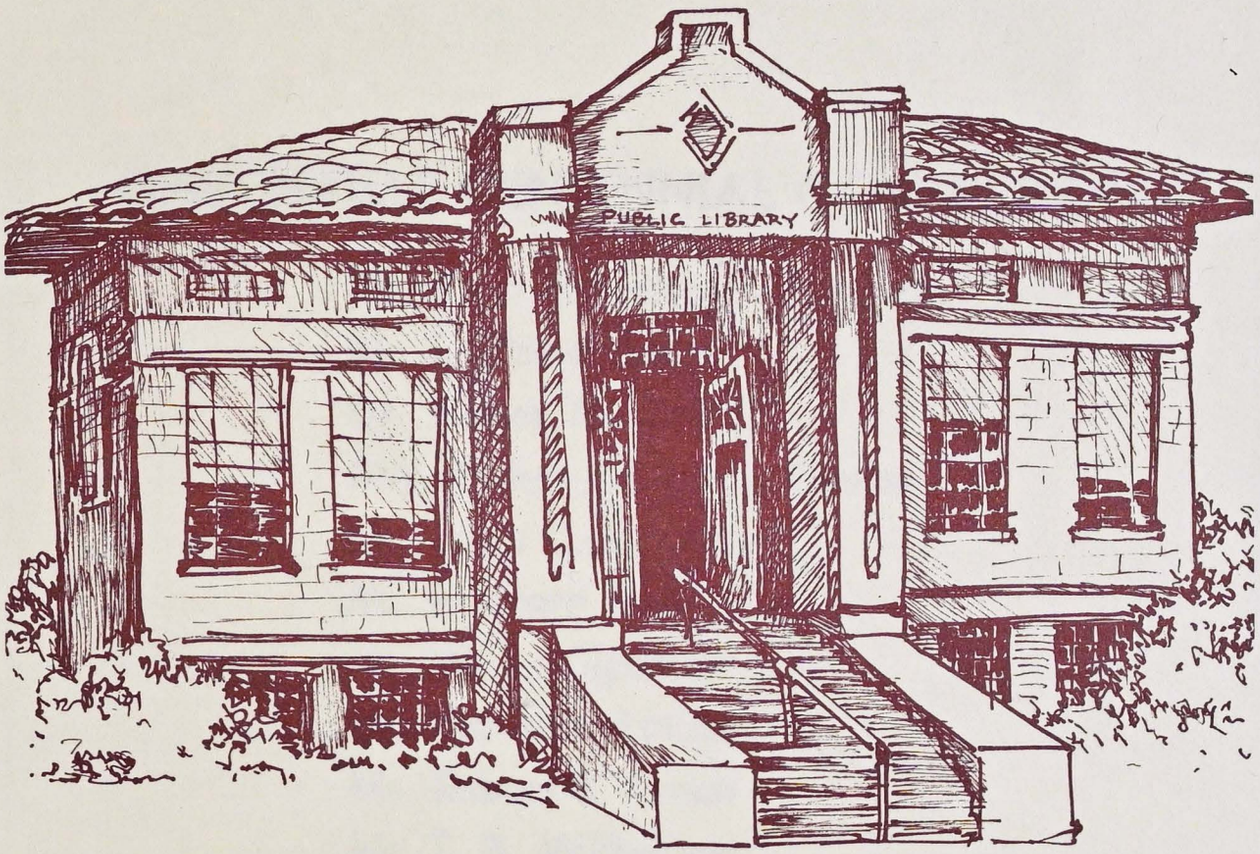
FIRST FIRE STATION

Farther north, on the corner of First Street and First Avenue Mr. Simonson built an Opera House in 1887, later known as Baird's Theatre and now Cox Furniture Company. (19)

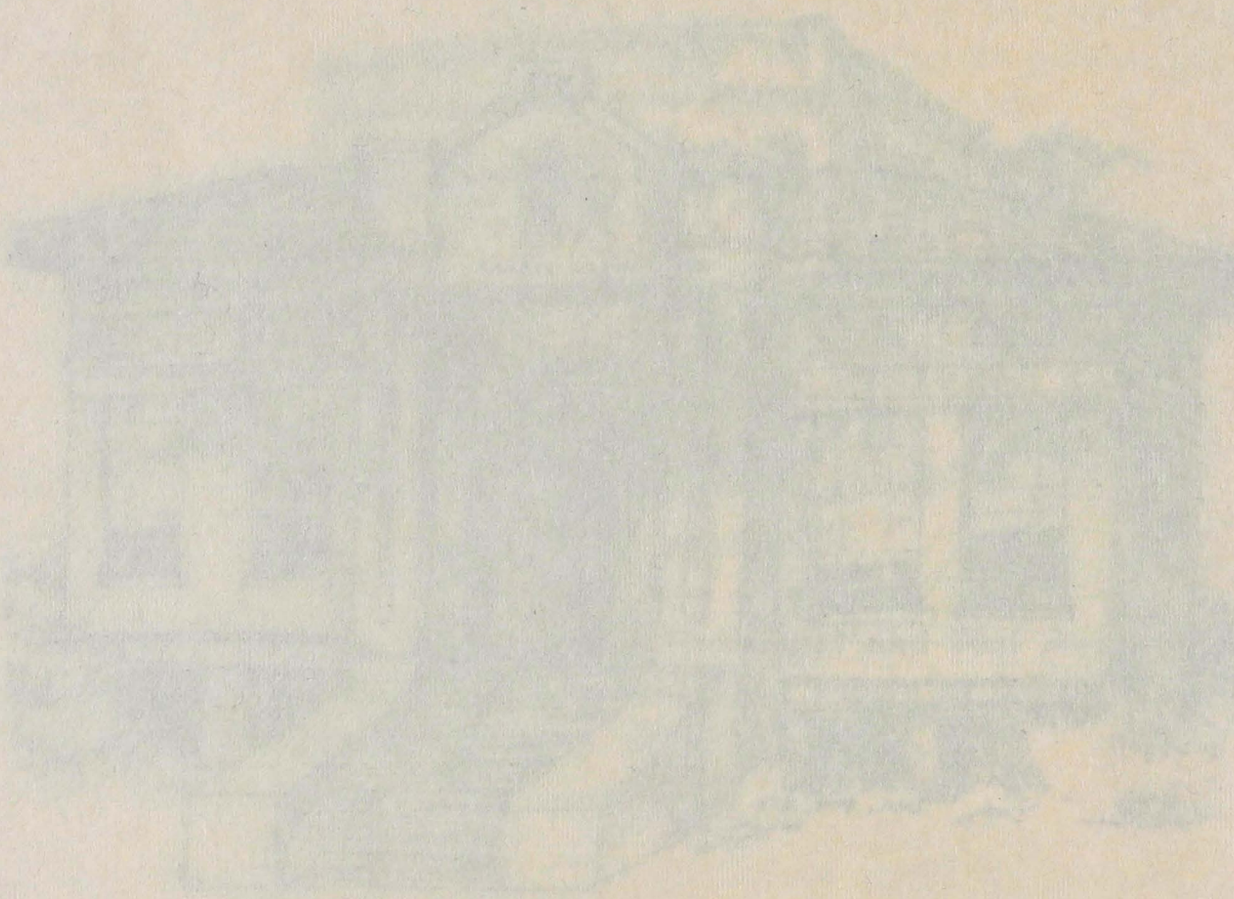
BAIRD THEATRE

At this corner turn east, passing Gainesville's oldest garage (20) and one of the earliest filling stations (21) located on the south side of South East Second Street and continue east to the Federal Building at 401 S. E. First Avenue. (22) Cross the street and enjoy the fountain and mall that connects the Federal Building with University Avenue.

At this intersection on the east was located the first public library building. (23) This Carneige building was demolished to make way for the second city library, vacated in 1968 when the library adjacent to the Municipal Building was occupied. The second library has been converted into a municipal court building.



FIRST PUBLIC LIBRARY



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